

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0998

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMB HILL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AR, US

SUBJ: RECOMMENDATION THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS VISIT
ARGENTINA

REF: BA 0977

1. REFLECTING ON CONVERSATION WITH VIGNES (SEE RETEL), IT STRIKES ME THAT WE HAVE REACHED A CRITICAL MOMENT IN OUR RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA. WE MUST REGAIN THE MOMENTUM NOW AND KEEP THE NEW DIALOGUE ON THE TRACK. GOA WISHES TO CONTINUE POLICY OF DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION WITH US, AND VIGNES HAS INDICATED HE WANTS TO BE HELPFUL TO US IN PUTTING NEW DIALOGUE BACK IN CONSTRUCTIVE CHANNEL, BUT THEY NEED REASSURANCE THAT US GOALS AND INTEREST HAVE NOT WAVERED. OBVIOUSLY, SECRETARY KISSINGERS' PROPOSED VISIT WILL REPRESENT BEST TONIC AND MOST CONVINCING FORM OF REASSURANCE. IT WILL, I AM CONVINCED, CONTRIBUTE DRAMATICALLY TO CLEARING THE ATMOSPHERE, NOT ONLY IN OUR RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA, BUT, INDEED, WITH THE REST OF THE HEMISPHERE. GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUES FOR ARGENTINA, I HAVE NO DOUBTS THAT THE ARGENTINES WOULD USE THE VISIT TO DISCUSS THOSE ISSUES IN A BUSINESSLIKE WAY. THEY COULD NOT AFFORD TO, AND WOULD NOT, TAKE "CHEAP SHOTS" OR ADOPT DIDACTIC ATTITUDES.

2. I BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL, HOWEVER, THAT WE TAKE AN
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INITIATIVE EVEN BEFORE THE SECRETARYS VISIT. I WOULD URGE

THAT THIS TAKE THE FORM A VISIT BY YOU TO ARGENTINA AND
ONE OR TWO OTHER KEY COUNTRIES, HOPEFULLY BEFORE THE END OF
THIS MONTH AND CERTAINLY BEFORE THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK IN
MARCH. THIS WOULD SERVE TO SIGNAL OUR CONTINUED INTEREST
TO REGENERATE MOMENTUM FOR THE NEW DIALOGUE (WHICH IF ONCE LOST
WILL BE DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO REVIVE), AND TO RE-
ASSURE VIGNES THAT THE SECRETARY WILL BE MAKING HIS TRIP.
(IF POSSIBLE, YOU MIGHT BE IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE VIGNES
WITH FIRM DATES FOR TRIP). IN ADDITION, IT WOULD GIVE YOU THE
OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME PERSONALLY ACQUAINTED WITH SOME OF
THE KEY OFFICIALS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND OTHER AGENCIES
OF THE GOA WHOM YOU HAVE NOT MET IN WASHINGTON OR IN
INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS. I FULLY RECOGNIZE THE PRESSURES
OF TIME UNDER WHICH YOU MUST OPERATE. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE
SUCH A TRIP IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE AND WOULD PRODUCE
RETURNS FULLY JUSTIFYING THE TIME INVEST.
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